

## Macron Pulls on Boots for Charity Football Game

PARIS (Dispatches) - French President Emmanuel Macron, who has his eye firmly on the goal of elections next year, donned his football boots and marshalled the midfield at a charity match on Thursday.

After a kiss from his wife Brigitte, the 43-year-old was all smiles as he took to the pitch in Poissy outside Paris alongside former international defender Marcel Desailly and ex-Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger.

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## Theo Hernandez Tests Positive for Covid

ROME (Dispatches) - AC Milan left-back Theo Hernandez has tested positive for Covid, just days after his France team-mate Adrien Rabiot contracted the virus, his club said.

The 24-year-old played alongside Rabiot in France's Nations League semi-final against Belgium last Thursday, scoring a 90th-minute winner.

Rabiot was ruled out of the final after testing positive for Covid, but Hernandez played the full 90 minutes in the world champions' 2-1 triumph over Spain.

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# Medvedev Stunned by Dimitrov in Indian Wells

INDIAN WELLS (Dispatches) - Reigning U.S. Open champion Daniil Medvedev joined the growing list of top-seed casualties at the ATP/WT Indian Wells, losing in the fourth round to world No. 28 Grigor Dimitrov 4-6, 6-4, 6-3.

Medvedev, who won his first Grand Slam title last month at Flushing Meadows, had not lost a set heading into the fourth round but dropped eight straight games, and had his serve broken six times against Dimitrov, en route to a stunning early exit for the top seed.

"I don't remember myself losing three service games, even four service games ever on hard courts," Medvedev said.

"That shows how slow this court is and the conditions, more like clay, which I don't like. To lose four times the serve is just unacceptable. That's why I lost the (second) set."

World No. 2 Medvedev did not take a break after his emotional U.S. Open victory and said his busy schedule may have finally caught up with him.

"I did feel exhausted in this tournament. Now I can say it. I couldn't say it before my matches. There are a few physical things that have come up," said Medvedev, who is hoping to eventually overtake world No. 1 Novak Djokovic.

Medvedev won the first set, was up 4-1 in the second and appeared to be cruising to another easy victory when the wheels came off: his unforced errors mounted and service game fell flat.

Medvedev had no answers for the way Dimitrov was playing and predicted the Bulgarian would likely go on to capture the title.

"If he plays like this, like the way he played me from 4-1, then he is going to win the tournament," Medvedev said.

"He played the second half of the match better than anyone did against me at the US Open.

It is not like I gave him the match."

The match turned in the sixth game of the second set as Dimitrov broke Medvedev's serve for the second time in the set to cut the Russian's lead to 4-2.

Dimitrov held serve in the next game and then broke Medvedev's serve twice more to take the set and lay the foundation for a dominating performance in the third.



The Bulgarian closed out the match on the first match point, when Medvedev blasted a forehand long.

"Been watching quite a bit of his matches," Dimitrov said of Medvedev. "I really wanted to play this match to be completely honest. What he has been able to accomplish this past year and a half is pretty amazing. I think it really pushes me also to do better."

Dimitrov will face Polish eighth seed Hubert Hurkacz, who rolled over Russian Aslan Karatsev 6-1, 6-3 on Wednesday in the quarter-finals.

The 25-year-old Medvedev beat Djokovic in the US Open final last month to prevent the Serbian star from becoming the first man since the legendary Rod Laver in the 1960s to win all four Grand Slams in the same year.

Medvedev made six double faults in the two hour, 15 minute match in the main stadium.

Medvedev, who has won 50 matches in 2021, described this as a minor setback because this event is not a Grand Slam.

"I don't see this as the end of the world. I don't think this would happen in a Grand Slam," he said.

This is the second time Dimitrov has beaten Medvedev in five career meetings. The last time was a three-set win in their first encounter in 2017 in London.

In other men's fourth-round matches, second seed Stefanos Tsitsipas defeated Australian Alex De Minaur 6-7 (3/7), 7-6 (7/3), 6-2 and third-seeded Alexander Zverev of Germany overpowered France's Gael Monfils 6-1, 6-3 in just 61 minutes.

## Fernandez to Skip Billie Jean King Cup Finals

TORONTO (Dispatches) - U.S. Open finalist Leylah Fernandez has decided not to represent Canada at next month's Billie Jean King Cup Finals in Prague, Tennis Canada said on Thursday.

The 19-year-old Fernandez, who went out in the last 16 at Indian Wells this week in her first tournament since losing to fellow teenager Emma Raducanu of Britain in the U.S. Open final, will be replaced by Carol Zhao.

"It has always been an honor to represent my country," world number 28 Fernandez said in a news release. "Canada has given me and my family so much opportunity and in the last few weeks, the Canadian support has meant the world to me.

"After consideration, I have made the decision to not play the BJK Cup Finals. I wish my team all the best this November!"

Fernandez has enjoyed a breakout season during which she won the Monterrey Open in March for her first WTA title.

She upped her game considerably at the year's final Grand Slam in New York where her run to the final included wins over defending champion Naomi Osaka, three-times Grand Slam winner Angelique Kerber and world number two Aryna Sabalenka.

Following her loss at Indian Wells, Fernandez said it had been a long season and that she was unsure of her playing plans for the rest of the year and needed to meet with her team and see where she was mentally and physically.

## Torres Suffers Fractured Foot

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester City will be without Ferran Torres for several weeks after the Spain forward suffered a fractured foot on international duty.

Torres is believed to have sustained the injury during Spain's UEFA Nations League semi-final win against Italy.

The 21-year-old was declared fit for the Nations League final defeat against France, but was forced off in the second half in Milan on Sunday.



# Nadal Still Unclear When He'll Play Again

MADRID (Dispatches) - Rafa Nadal said he still does not know when he will play tennis again as he works to complete his recovery from a recurring foot injury that cut short his 2021 season.

The 20-times major winner, who struggled with back issues at the start of this year before pulling out of Wimbledon and the Tokyo Olympics, last played in August at the

Citi Open in Washington.

He announced ahead of the U.S. Open that the injury to his left foot would rule him out for the rest of the year.

"I want to recover from this injury in good condition," the 35-year-old Spaniard, currently ranked sixth, said on Wednesday on Mallorca, his home island.

"I don't know when I will play again, I work a lot every day, I follow a specific plan with a marked roadmap..."

"There are always things that I can't control one hundred per cent, but inside my head I'm clear on what my objectives are and I trust that things will follow a positive course."

## Neymar Has Many Years Left At the Top

PARIS (Dispatches) - Paris Saint-Germain coach Mauricio Pochettino says he has "no doubt" that Neymar will carry on playing at the top level "for many years" to come after recent comments by the Brazilian superstar which suggested next year's World Cup would be his last.

"Ney' is an honest person who has no problem talking about his feelings. He has been living under the spotlight since he was very young. He is mentally very strong. I don't think there is a problem," Pochettino said when asked about the world's most expensive player.

Neymar, who has played in two World Cups and is his country's second-top scorer of all time behind Pele, said last weekend the 2022 tournament in Qatar would be his last one as he "doesn't have the strength to put up with more football".

Neymar's comments have sparked a debate in his home country about mental health. He will be 34 when the 2026 World Cup rolls around.

However Pochettino does not believe Neymar will withdraw from the game any time soon.

"Sometimes things are taken out of context. I have no doubt that 'Ney' loves football, gets enjoyment from it and will continue to play for many years," added Pochettino, who was speaking ahead of PSG's Ligue 1 game against Angers on Friday.

The former Barcelona superstar will miss PSG's game as he remains on international duty. Brazil, who drew 0-0 with Colombia last weekend, play host to Uruguay in another World Cup qualifier on Thursday night.

Several leading PSG players, including Lionel Messi, will be missing against Angers because of the late end to this round of South American qualifiers.



## Ivanovic, Moya Headline Hall of Fame Nominees

LONDON (Dispatches) - Serbian Ana Ivanovic, Italy's Flavia Pennetta and Spaniards Carlos Moya and Juan Carlos Ferrero headlined the list of six nominees up for induction into the International Tennis Hall of Fame.

The quartet were announced as nominees for the Class of 2022 along with former doubles players Cara Black of Zimbabwe and Lisa Raymond of the United States, the Newport, Rhode Island-based Hall of Fame said on Thursday.

Former world number one Ivanovic, who counts the 2008 French Open among her 15 career titles, spent 91 weeks inside the top five in the rankings.

Pennetta lifted the U.S. Open trophy in 2015 after beating compatriot Roberta Vinci in the first all-Italian final and won an additional 10 singles titles during a career in which she reached a career-high six in the rankings.

Pennetta also won a doubles crown at the Australian Open and was a key member of the Italian teams that won four titles at the since-renamed Fed Cup.

Moya, who counts the 1998 French Open among his 20 career titles, is a former world number one and was a member of the victorious 2004 Spanish Davis Cup team.

Ferrero captured his lone career Grand Slam title at the 2003 French Open a year after losing in the final at Roland Garros. His solid form in 2003, which included a run to the U.S. Open final, propelled him to the top of the rankings.

In 2000, Ferrero struck the passing shot that clinched the last and decisive point for the first Spanish Davis Cup championship team.

The Class of 2022, determined by a combination of votes by fans, journalists, historians and existing Hall of Famers, will be announced early next year.

